

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 100526Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7265

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO LFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1673

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 10638

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR VS CB ENRG

SUBJECT: GVN/GKR DISPUTE OVER OFFSHORE AREAS -- GKR DECIDES
ON COURSE OF ACTION

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 10291

B. SAIGON 9520

C. SAIGON 9988

1. SUMMARY. GKR HAS DECIDED TO ACCEPT GVN-PROPOSED LINE
DIVIDING DISPUTED AREA IN HALF ON PRIVATE, UNOFFICIAL BASIS
THAT DOES NOT COMMIT EITHER SIDE BUT PERMITS EACH DE FACTO USE
OF ITS ZONE. GKR IS PROPOSING TO GVN DISCUSSIONS IN SAIGON.
THE DRILLSHIP GLOMAR IV SHOULD RECOMMENCE OPERATIONS IN SEVERAL
DAYS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 9, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR INFORMED US OF RESULTS
OF GKR DELIBERATIONS ON DISPUTED OFFSHORE OIL PROBLEM. THE
POSITION, AS APPROVED BY PRESIDENT LON NOL, IS AS FOLLOWS:
THE GKR LAYS CLAIM TO VIRTUALLY ALL THE AREA CONCERNED
BUT REALIZES THE GVN CONSIDERS IT TO BE SOUTH VIETNAMESE.
TO RESOLVE THE DILEMMA, THE GKR SUGGESTS THAT THE GVN
PROPOSED LINE, HELFWAY BETWEEN POULO WAI AND HON PAJANG
ISLANDS (REFTELS A AND B) BE ACCEPTED PRIVATELY AND
INFORMALLY WITHOUT COMMUNIQUE OR OFFICIAL PUBLIC DECLARA-
TIONS. WHAT THIS WOULD MEAN WOULD BE THAT THE GKR
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COULD CONDUCT OIL EXPLORATIONS ON ITS SIDE SUCH AS THE

ONGOING ELF-ERAP ONE AND THE GVN COULD DO THE SAME IN ITS ZONE. THERE COULD BE RITUAL PROTESTATIONS ON BOTH SIDES FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION, BUT THERE WOULD BE NO SUCH ACTIONS AS THE GVN DISPATCHING ITS GUNBOATS TO THE SITE (REFTELS A AND C). THE EVENTUAL DEFINITIVE RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE WOULD BE PUT OFF UNTIL A MORE PROPITIOUS TIME; IN THE MEANTIME, THIS INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ALLIES FIGHTING AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY WOULD SUFFICE.

3. THE MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT THE GKR IS OPPOSED TO MAKING ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE MATTER BECAUSE, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, IT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE DIVISION AS PROPOSED BY THE GVN; MORE PRACTICALLY, WHEN IT GOT OUT THAT THE GKR HAD "CEDED" THIS TERRITORY, GRUNK PROPAGANDA WOULD IMMEDIATELY BRAND THE GKR AS TRAITORS AND NATION-SELLERS. HE ADDED THAT THE GVN SHOULD WANT TO KEEP THE AGREEMENT QUIET IN ORDER TO AVOID SIMILAR CHARGES BY THE PRG.

4. THE MININSTER SAID THAT THE DECISION TO PROCEED IN THIS FASHON WAS TAKEN AFTER WIDESPREAD CONSULATION AND THERE WAS UNANIMOUS APPROVAL FOR IT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. HE HAS NOW WRITTEN A LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM ASKING HIM TO CONVOY TO THE GVN AMBASSADOR HERE THE GKR DESIRE FOR DISCUSSIONS IN SAIGON ON THE PROBLEM. THE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE WITHOUT CONDITIONS, THE MINISTER EMPHASIZED; THE GKR DELEGATION HAS BEEN NAMED AND IS READY TO GO. HE DID NOT KNOW IF THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS TRANSMITTED THE REQUEST YET BUT HOPES THAT THE GVN WILL ULTIMATELY CONSENT TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITHOUT DEMANDING ADVANCE COMMITMENTS.

5. AS FOR THE DRILLSHIP GLOMAR IV, THE TIMING DESCRIBED IN REFTTEL C TURNS OUT TO HAVE BEEN ACCURATE. THE MINISTER SAID THAT THE GLOMAR IV DID NOT RECOMMENCE OPERATIONS ON AUGUST 4 AS HE HAD SAID PREVIOUSLY (REF A) BUT WOULD DO SO IN THREE OR FOUR DAYS.

6. COMMENT: THE GKR APPROACH AS DESCRIBED ABOVE SEEMS TO US A REASONABLE ONE, AND IF ACCEPTED BY THE GVN, SHOULD SERVE TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, PETROLEUM, OFFSHORE DRILLING, OFFSHORE OIL FIELDS, TERRITORIAL WATERS VIOLATIONS, MILITARY PLANS, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PHNOM10638
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740219-0877
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740857/aaaabxev.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: A. PHNOM PENH 10291
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 APR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <28 FEB 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GVN/GKR DISPUTE OVER OFFSHORE AREAS -- GKR DECIDES ON COURSE OF ACTION
TAGS: PBOR, ENRG, VS, CB
To: STATE SAIGON
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005